THE NATURE CONSERVANCY NEWS

September/October 1980

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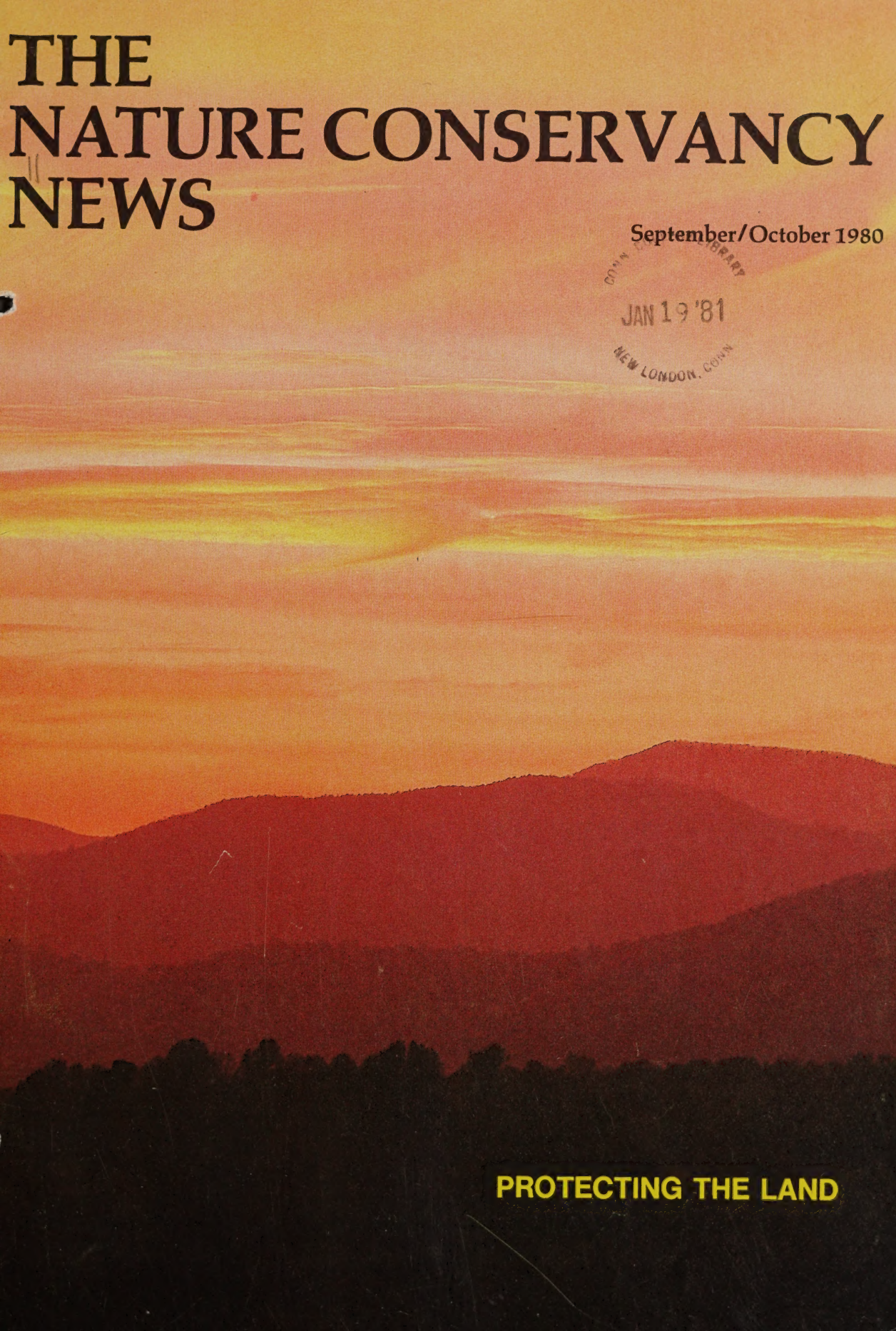
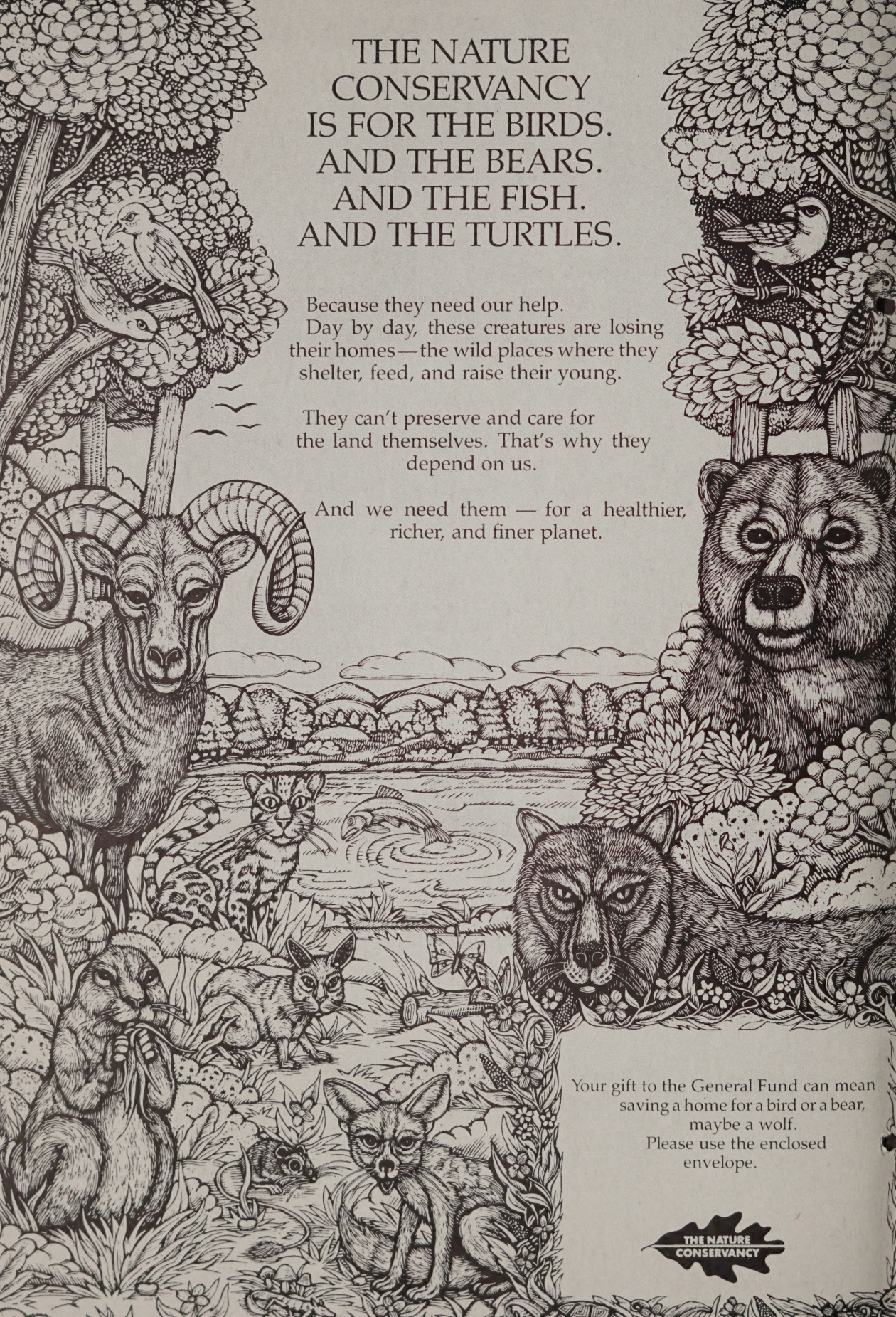


PROTECTING THE LAND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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY NEWS

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 5
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 1980

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The Nature Conservancy

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COVER: Autumn afternoon in the Appalachians. © Photo by Jack Lynn.

The Nature Conservancy is a national conservation organization committed to the preservation of natural diversity by protecting lands containing the best examples of all components of our natural world.

To date the Conservancy and its members have been responsible for the preservation of 1,639,037 acres of forests, marshes, prairies, mountains, and islands: home to rare and endangered species of wildlife and plants. 2,379 projects have been completed since the acquisition of the first preserve in 1954. Approximately 60% of all preserves are retained by the Conservancy and managed by volunteer land stewards.

A membership, non-profit organization, the Conservancy was incorporated in 1951 in the District of Columbia for scientific and educational purposes.

A copy of the last financial report filed with the Department of State may be obtained by writing to: New York State, Department of State, Office of Charities Registration, Albany, New York 12231, *or* The Nature Conservancy, 1800 North Kent Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209.

PROTECTION PLANNING:

by Phillip M. Hoose

As The Nature Conservancy has become more adept at identifying portions of the landscape in greatest need of protection, it has learned that outright acquisition of the properties involved is not always necessary or possible.

For one thing, real estate and biological perspectives rarely coincide at a given place. The ecological boundaries of a significant area may turn out to contain several properties, or fragments of properties. These tracts can be owned by anyone, from churches and schools to tribal councils to the federal government, which owns about a third of all land in the U.S. One Atlantic Coast site, for instance, is owned by 13 separate entities, including a town, a corporation, and several absentee owners. Such sites make very complex conservation projects because the individual needs and desires of all the owners must be taken into account. Many are unwilling to sell or donate their land under any circumstances.

Within this context, the limits of land acquisition as a sole conservation strategy have become apparent. Land is expensive, and is becoming increasingly so. Acquisition dollars can be hard to find and, in a period of economic distress, federal matching funds are not readily available.

There are also limits to the amount of land the Conservancy can own and manage, particularly when the tax-exempt status of lands held by nonprofit groups is at issue in some states. Furthermore, it is not necessary for the Conservancy to own, at least immediately, properties whose owners already deliberately protect the natural elements occurring there.

The Conservancy has responded to these new situations and to limited acquisition possibilities by expanding its repertoire. It is now able to offer a variety of incentives to protect land, beyond even the bountiful inducements for charity found in the *Federal Tax Code*. While the proven ability to acquire property quickly and at bargain prices remains the backbone of the Conservancy's preservation program, the organization has taken steps to supplement its acquisition program through "protection planning"—that is, by using other tools or methods to safeguard natural lands.

Conservancy research into different ways to protect land began in 1974. From this research and from the experience of its field staff, several major protection tools—each having many variations—have emerged. The techniques vary according to cost, effectiveness, the duration of protection, and the speed with which they can be used.

For example, many rare features of the natural world have been destroyed simply because the owner was not aware of their presence. Thus, in several states, the Conservancy has begun a large scale *notification* effort, designed to inform landowners that their property contains something special, and, in turn, to discover the owners' attitudes toward conservation. This exchange of information frequently forms the basis for a stronger protection effort.

In Indiana, the Conservancy awards an engraved plaque to landowners who agree voluntarily to protect certain natural features, and to notify the Conservancy should they ever decide to sell the property or cancel the agreement. This effort to honor and recognize landowners who make such a commitment is called *registration*. In several states the Conservancy is negotiating *leases* and *management agreements*, which obligate a landowner to manage his or her property according to specific terms for a prescribed period, without transferring a permanent interest in the property.

The Nature Conservancy has acquired *rights of first refusal* on several significant North Carolina and New York properties. The technique gives the Conservancy the right to match any offer received

Life Beyond the Tax Code

for the lands and to make the first offer should the owner ever decide to sell.

Federal, state, and local agencies have the ability to set aside or *designate* natural areas within their own management units through existing administrative programs. The Research Natural Areas Program, for example, has already given added protection to many significant federal lands. The Conservancy is encouraging public agencies to use available programs for designating natural areas.

Conservation easements allow the Conservancy to acquire selectively only those rights necessary to protect the natural features of the land, while allowing the landowner to retain title to his or her property. The Conservancy has already obtained a total of 80 conservation easements in 22 states.

Finally, in 12 states, the Conservancy can increase protection of an area it already owns by *dedicating* the site into a system of nature preserves that are safeguarded by state law from condemnation or conversion to other uses. The Conservancy also encourages other landowners and agencies to dedicate their lands.

None of these protection methods is new, nor are they the only techniques available; but they can be used dynamically together to protect areas that support critical natural elements, from endangered species to representative plant communities and vital habitats. For example, the owner of a tract, already notified, might later agree to sign a voluntary protection agreement. After a year or two of getting to know and like a Conservancy field representative, the landowner might then enter into a formal management agreement, and might at the same time grant the Conservancy a right of first refusal should he or she ever decide to sell the property. In time, the owner might agree to sell or donate to the Conservancy a conservation easement or maybe even the property itself. The Conservancy could in turn dedicate even partial property rights into a state nature preserve system, thereby increasing protection.

Each property owner, even the federal government, views land in a slightly different way, and sometimes with a fierce emotional attachment. Some see property as a link to the past, others as a bridge to the future. Owners want their land to be all sorts of things—a place to live or work; a source of current or future income, food, security, investment income, or tax relief. Or the land may fulfill one's need for continuity and serenity. *The key is to match protection incentives with the needs of property owners.* By becoming more versatile, the Conservancy can offer each landowner several options for a tailor-made conservation solution.

The Conservancy has only scratched the surface of protection planning. But further experience will suggest new methods and incentives for protecting land. Projects that might once have appeared impossible to complete might now yield to a mixture of techniques.

Even more important, an increased protection repertoire will help translate ecological data into land conservation. In essence, by diversifying itself, The Nature Conservancy has become better able to preserve natural diversity.

Phillip M. Hoose, Director of Preserve Selection and Design for The Nature Conservancy, is author of *Building an Ark: Tools for the Preservation of Natural Diversity*. To be published in December, 1980, by Island Press, the book describes nationwide efforts to use a wide array of voluntary, administrative, and legal methods for protecting natural diversity. The volume may be ordered by writing: Island Press, Star Route 1, Box 38, Covelo, California 95428. (Price is $12.00.)

A Promise for the Land

by Edward O. Welles, Jr.

The land is a fabric, densely woven. Through it run fine biologic threads of plant and animal life. But, inevitably, a manmade fiber or two will be spun in among the threads. Who owns the land? What is the cost of protecting it? How do you protect the property if that is your wish?

The answers to such questions are often complex. The land may not be for sale, or there may not be enough money available to purchase it. Or, an endangered species may inhabit an area that encompasses property owned by half a dozen people—people who have different perceptions about, and intentions for, their land.

Vital, unspoiled land is growing scarce; protecting it more elaborate and costly. Efforts are currently underway in three states—Indiana, North Carolina, and Tennessee—to ask landowners whose properties harbor critical elements of the natural world, from an endangered species to a native plant community, to protect those features voluntarily, through registration agreements. In each of the three states, the registration programs rest on the bedrock of scientific data collected by the Conservancy's heritage programs, which provide inventories of a state's ecological diversity.

In the registration programs, field workers use an inventory like a compass, orienting themselves to important sites and informing the areas' owners of their lands' ecological value. Protecting the areas through voluntary registration simply means that, once notified, the landowners are asked to enter into a nonbinding agreement to preserve the land in its existing condition. Handsome plaques or certificates are awarded the registrants, honoring the significance of their gesture and of their property.

Registration can be considered an important first step toward stronger protection of critical habitats. In addition, the protection tool appeals to a person's pride in owning an unspoiled natural area, recognizing that many property owners view land as less of a commodity and more of what it truly is—something biologic, a life-sustaining entity.

Roots—Past and Present

The forerunner of registration programs originated in Illinois in the summer of 1978. The Natural Land Institute, a private, nonprofit land-use research group, secured a $150,000 foundation grant and used it to hire five field workers to travel about the countryside, interviewing the owners of natural areas identified through a statewide survey. (A sixth participant was subcontracted from The Nature Conservancy.) The Institute's "landowner contact program" differed from the three registration programs, however. Rather than solicit voluntary protection agreements, the field workers merely informed landowners of the significance of their properties and tried to determine the owners' attitudes toward conservation.

Although their findings are not yet complete, Gerry Paulson, director of the program in Illinois, estimates that "about 15 percent of the people we contacted are willing to discuss some kind of legal

preservation agreement to protect their land. In addition," he says, "close to half the people are sympathetic to our goals and are not planning to develop their properties."

One of the Illinois field workers, Don McFall, recalls, "I tried not to go into this (program) with too many preconceptions, but I have to admit I was sort of surprised. I called about 100 people and only one hung up on me. People *are* willing to talk to you."

McFall was working in the west-central part of the state, a rural, almost entirely agricultural region. Having grown up on a farm himself, he found talking about the land an easy "bridge" in his encounters. "I was surprised how easily a lot of people understood the concept of natural diversity. They understood why an ungrazed woodlot is more valuable than a grazed one."

McFall discovered many landowners' concerns to be rooted in both past and present. He often talked to people who had seen fencerows disappear in favor of a few more cash-producing rows of corn and soybeans. With the fencerows went the animals. The people's roots went back only a few generations to Germany—a fact suggested by the 40- and 80-acre tracts of old-growth forest that stood inviolate on their lands, and which had brought McFall to meet the landowners in the first place. "It seems that a lot of these farmers have a strong ethic in preserving timber. What stood out in my mind was how they actually referred to their woodlots as keepsakes and heirlooms. I thought that was kind of neat."

Judy Faulkner, another Illinois field worker, echoes McFall. "I often asked farmers why their families had decided to settle here. A lot of them would say: 'Well, my grandfather came to this country, and when he got here he stopped because it reminded him of the forest back home in Germany.' " In Faulkner's travels, she often sensed a strong emotional tie to the land, a feeling of pride. When she arrived at one farm, the owner insisted that she hop on the back of his tractor and they go out to look at the site. On another visit, a mother summoned her children to listen to Faulkner, and she made them promise that if the wolf ever came to the door the last thing to go would be the land.

Faulkner was not afraid to respond in kind. "I told people that in Illinois 7/100 of 1 percent of the land is left with its native vegetation. That figure usually shocks people. I stress that what's left

Representatives of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program present a registry plaque to the owner of Chimney Rock Natural Area.

Above: surveying the field in Illinois—Natural Land Institute staffer Lydia Meyer with Phlox divaricata; *opposite page: NLI's Max Hutchison talks with southern Illinois landowner Alan Main in Heron Pond-Little Black Slough Nature Preserve.*

is a remnant, a museum piece. If we could save it, then at least it would be a reminiscence of what we had. Unfortunately, that's the best we can do."

Last spring the Natural Land Institute turned over its findings to The Nature Conservancy, which will attempt to fashion protection arrangements with many of the landowners that were contacted.

Next door in Indiana, Paul Carmony represents the Indiana Natural Areas Registry, a program conducted jointly by the Conservancy and the state's Department of Natural Resources. In his first two months on the job, Carmony has contacted 45 landowners and registered 30 tracts. By registering their properties, Indiana landowners formally agree to protect the significant features as best they can, and to notify the Conservancy of any threats to these features that might arise. In addition, registrants consent to contact the Conservancy should they decide to sell a site or withdraw from the voluntary protection agreement.

Carmony, who put 3,000 miles on his pickup in six weeks, says what he dreads most is "making that first phone call and getting that initial interview. If they will let me come talk to them," he said, "I figure that's about half the battle."

When Carmony arrives he meets with varied reaction. Some people wait for him to pull the snake oil out of the truck. "Some have no idea what The Nature Conservancy is—they keep looking for a gimmick." One man said he would happily sell Carmony the "weeds" growing in his gravel pit. Carmony called them by a different name—rare plants. On another visit, a couple was dazzled when Carmony took them down into the peat bog on their land to show them the wildflowers in bloom. "The last time they might have gone down there was four or five years ago to chase some heifers that had gotten loose."

Carmony continues: "One of the best things to do is to get the landowner to walk with you and look at his land. It's a lot easier to establish a rap-

port with somebody if you're walking through the woods than sitting in his kitchen." The familiar turf underfoot, he feels, equalizes the exchange between landowner and stranger in pickup. "A lot of these people have lived in the same place for generations. One farm I visited had been in the same family since 1812." For Carmony, initial visits have sometimes unfolded into two-hour coffee klatches. "It's like going over to your best friend's or neighbor's house. You sometimes feel like you've known the other person all your life."

One site he visited belonged to a brother and sister—now in their 80's—who had been born there. The property includes an old-growth forest of beech, tulip, and swamp oak trees. "They're pestered by timber buyers all the time. They think if they register the land it might serve as ammunition against the buyers." Carmony adds that those woods could mean a lot of quick cash to their owners. "These people live very modestly. I'm sure they could use the money. I think it's interesting that some people are willing to forego the pleasures that most of the rest of us want."

Cats and Religion

"If I had the time and the staff I could easily register 200 properties," says Charles Roe, who has registered 50. He is the director of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, established by the Conservancy in 1976 and now part of North Carolina's state government. Roe established the North Carolina Registry of Natural Heritage Areas less than a year ago. The program is much like Indiana's—based on voluntary agreements—but, as part of the state's Department of Natural Resources and Community Development (Division of Parks and Recreation), it has a slightly different flair.

Given the temper of the time, introducing yourself as a government worker is not always the best overture when the subject is land. Julie Moore, one of Roe's assistants, says, "We have to make an effort not to scare people."

Moore says that unlike field workers in other programs, she and Roe sometimes rely for introductions on a statewide "network of contacts"—naturalists who live near the landowners they want to approach. "That makes it as personal as possible." She adds, "To be successful with people in the country, you have to know what their lifestyle is, what their interests are." Recently she spent 45 minutes on a woman's front porch, talking cats and religion. Then they went out back to look at the rare plants growing from a rock outcrop. The woman and her husband had lived there 30 years; their kitchen window framed the rock. "She already knew she had something valuable," says Moore. "To her it was beautiful and scenic. It changed with the seasons."

Friends of the woman (now a widow) came and went in the shadow of the rock. Neighbors came to pick flowers. A young woman working on her master's thesis in botany came with her baby. While she collected specimens, she put the infant under a pine tree. Some college students came and lay down on the rock all day and barely moved. It turned out they weren't sunbathing but looking for insects.

Moore finds that landowners often know their land and are aware of what it supports. One site recently registered belongs to a retired couple who spent 12 years looking for property they considered sufficiently diverse in topography and plant life. In eastern North Carolina, zoologist Lance Peacock, who works with Moore and Roe, met a young man who had returned to his family's farm after a few years as a lawyer in Atlanta. "I had a nice discussion with him about what was on his land," Peacock recalls. "He already perceives it as a nature preserve and wants to keep it that way. He knew about some fairly obscure things we are interested in, like the Mississippi kite. He may have the northernmost breeding population in the country. Since he invited us to come back out when we wanted to, we'll return to do surveys there. That's a good contact to further, as well as an opportunity for us to learn from each other about what's on his land."

This last observation echoes the thoughts of one of the Illinois field workers, Lydia Meyer. She says, "Meeting with landowners is the only way you can really find out about an unusual tract and people's intentions for it. I feel it's important to talk directly with the owner. It's the only way you can get beyond the data."

Interviewing landowners also pumps new blood into the heritage program inventories of natural elements. As workers trudge into the field, they learn more about what exists on a site and can update the biological inventory. Landowner notification and voluntary registration hold the promise not only of increased protection for the land, but also of greater knowledge. The land teaches —about itself and about the people who live on it and love it.

A Washington, D.C.-based free-lance writer, **Edward O. Welles, Jr.,** has contributed as an author to two *National Geographic* books. He is a frequent contributor to the *Washington Post Magazine.*

By Train Through the Grasslands

by Louis Borie

The gentle swaying of the coach and rhythmic clatter of train wheels on steel rails lulls your mind as AMTRAK's St. Clair Limited speeds its way westward from Detroit to Chicago. Close your eyes and it's easy to slip back to when those railroad ties had just been laid through southern Michigan more than a century ago. In the mid-1800's, a train journey from Detroit to points west might have been the beginning of a great adventure, traveling through land only lightly settled and little known.

When the Michigan Central Railroad had completed its line from Kalamazoo to the Indiana border in the spring of 1850, the southwest corner of the state was gingerly dotted with the first industrious pioneers. They were immigrants from the East and the South, settlers looking for a suitable place to put down roots, familial as well as agricultural. They followed the old Indian trails, paths that took them through dense forests, oak openings, and wide open grasslands—huge, expansive meadows, unlike anything encountered in the immigrants' homelands.

The grasslands were Michigan's prairies. Lying at the very northeastern tip of the vast grassland system that once stretched mid-continent from Ohio to Kansas, up into Nebraska and Iowa, and down into northern Oklahoma, Michigan's prairies were smaller than the prairies further south and west. But they were just as lush and no less genuine. The pioneers who claimed these grasslands as their home must have had mixed emotions as their wagons came to rest on the solid turf. The densely tangled roots of the prairie plants were almost impenetrable, giving way only to a bull plow and several teams of oxen. But once turned, the sod exposed a soil that was deep and rich. For their toil, the homesteading farmers were rewarded with bumper crops of wheat and corn.

Prairie is the French word for meadow, first used to describe the grasslands of North America by French traders and hunters journeying cross-country. Meadow is an apt description. The local Indians, however, referred to the prairies with the same word they used for fire—suggesting the process by which the prairie ecosystem is perpetuated.

Alive and well and living in prairies, thanks to the AMTRAK agreement: rattlesnake master (opposite page), Turk's cap lily (left), and compass plant (below).

Simply put, grasslands need to be periodically burned or grazed in order to survive. This seeming contradiction is actually sound ecology: if prairies were left undisturbed by fire, woody plants would eventually split the sod, take root, and in time overshadow the sun-loving grasses and other smaller prairie species. The periodic burning—initiated naturally by lightning and, in more recent centuries, by native and immigrant Americans—is a way of arresting plant succession. The annual plants of the prairie thrive under this regime, while the perennials are kept at bay.

The prairies and their fertile soils attracted increasing numbers of homesteaders. As the people settled, more and more grasslands were turned into farmland and pastures. The waving seas of grasses began to disappear. When the railroads arrived, southern Michigan was opened up even more. Residential, commercial, and industrial enterprises began to flourish in the Great Lakes region, and the prairies, in turn, were further diminished.

But a bit of the grasslands remained. Ironically, while the railroads provided ready access to the

prairies, they also preserved parts of them. Since the railways reserved a 100-foot-wide strip of land for the track right-of-way, property remaining on either side of the train tracks was often left undisturbed and is still found unharmed today. Southern Michigan's stretch of track from Kalamazoo to the Indiana line is one such example. Though it has changed hands from the Michigan Central to the New York Central to the Penn Central, and eventually, in 1976, to AMTRAK, each railroad company has managed the line in essentially the same way—by burning the vegetation on each side of the tracks to control the "weeds."

Not everyone would call the plants "weeds" of course. Gazing out the window of AMTRAK's St. Clair Limited, an occasional flash of color in the trackside blur catches your eye. These are prairie plants. Their habitat was protected when the original right-of-way was acquired for the railway tracks. In addition, since the railroad companies have always burned trackside vegetation, the strips of grassland have been managed inadvertently along ecological principles. In many cases, these prairie stretches are ribbons of untouched and unbroken sod that support original prairie vegetation. Most passengers on the St. Clair Limited probably don't realize that the green corridor they are passing through is a living museum, a slice of Michigan that looks much the same as it did when the railroads arrived in 1850.

But others, mostly botanists who can recognize and identify the "weeds" as prairie species, have long known that these grassland remnants exist along railroad rights-of-way. In southwestern Michigan and in other prairie states, nature centers and botanical gardens have used track-sides as seed sources when trying to create their own demonstration prairies.

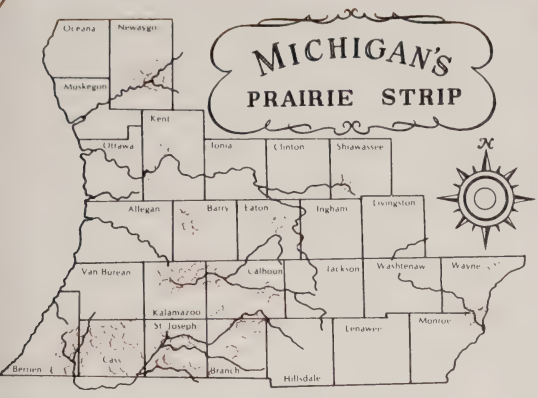
The demonstration prairie at Fernwood, Inc., a nature center in Niles, Michigan, is composed largely of plants from the nearby AMTRAK line. On a collecting trip one day, Fernwood's botanist, Peg Kohring, discovered that AMTRAK's maintenance crew was mowing and bulldozing the vegetation along the track, instead of setting the brush on fire. When she asked AMTRAK's district engineer about the new procedures, he, in turn, asked why she was trespassing on the railroad's line. Undaunted, Ms. Kohring told him about the remnant prairies along the AMTRAK line and the importance of burning to rejuvenate them. The engineer agreed to meet with her at the site to discuss the problem.

On a survey of the railroad line a short time later, Kohring (now field representative for The Nature Conservancy's Michigan Field Office) and AMTRAK representatives identified six prairie parcels that could be protected. The tracts support a number of Michigan's rare and endangered plants. Fernwood, Inc., and AMTRAK struck an informal agreement to protect the prairie strips. AMTRAK agreed not to bulldoze as long as Fernwood removed the encroaching brush. Although the arrangement worked, a more permanent, binding agreement seemed desirable.

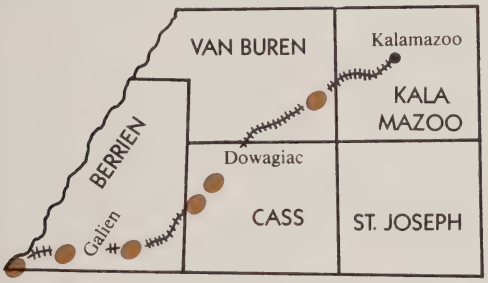
Little precedent existed for negotiating with a railroad to set aside land for plant conservation, but AMTRAK was willing to explore the possibility of a legal agreement with The Nature Conservancy to protect the remnant prairies. Leasing the six separate tracts was discussed; however, this method was judged not quite appropriate because a standard lease would not adapt itself to the unique management arrangements needed to protect both the prairies as well as the rights of the railroad company. The Conservancy suggested an individually tailored type of agreement between itself and AMTRAK—one that would be flexible enough to permit special management considerations. Subsequently signed in November 1978 by The Nature Conservancy and AMTRAK, the renewable contract is aptly named: a management agreement. Under its terms, the six prairie strips have been designated "prairie management areas," to be administered for scientific use by the Conservancy's Michigan Field Office. Furthermore, AMTRAK will not plow, spray with herbicides, or damage the flora on the prairies. In return, the Conservancy will periodically burn the vegetation and clear the brush along the tracks.

All together, the six AMTRAK prairies total about four miles of right-of-way, on either one side or both sides of the tracks. Most plant species characteristic of dry, intermediate, and wet prairies are represented on the six parcels, including 15 plants on Michigan's list of endangered and threatened flora. Bakertown Fen, the largest and most diverse of the AMTRAK prairies, is the only place in Michigan where the tiny shooting star grows. Other rare prairie plants include meadow beauty, compass plant, white lady's-slipper, prairie coreopsis, and rattlesnake master. Dozens of more common plants with equally descriptive names also flourish on the AMTRAK prairies—yellow coneflower, beggar's tick, hairy puccoon, and poverty oat grass, among others. But the dominant plants—those that give the land the look and feel of a prairie—are the grasses. Lush stands of Indian grass, little bluestem, and big bluestem, ten feet tall, bend and sway in the midsummer breeze.

The management agreement worked out with AMTRAK was one of the Conservancy's first uses of this protection tool. Essentially, the AMTRAK agreement was fashioned to satisfy the owner's



"Michigan's prairie strip" reprinted with the permission of **Michigan Natural Resources** (May/June 1978 issue).



The AMTRAK prairies are located in the five southwesternmost counties of Michigan, where most of the state's remnant prairies survive.

concerns and desires and, at the same time, to match the management needs of a unique natural area. Subsequent management agreements signed by the Michigan Field Office and other field offices have been designed "from scratch" in the same way.

Using this method of protection, the Conservancy can negotiate a legal contract with a landowner, corporate or private, which not only addresses the question of how a natural area or feature should be managed, but also spells out the role of each party in carrying out the management procedures. (Before the actual agreement is signed, a plan for managing the property is prepared by the Conservancy's stewardship staff and a field representative and then approved by the landowner.) The ways each party is permitted to use the property, as well as the length and renewability of the agreement itself, also are detailed in the contract. In the case of the AMTRAK prairies, the management agreement is automatically renewed at the end of each five-year term. Should a situation arise that makes it undesirable to continue the contract, either party may terminate the agreement by giving the other party 60 days' written notice.

One advantage of the management agreement is that it is a thrifty conservation tool: large financial transactions are not involved. In most cases, the Conservancy pays the landowner a nominal yearly rent to continue the agreement.

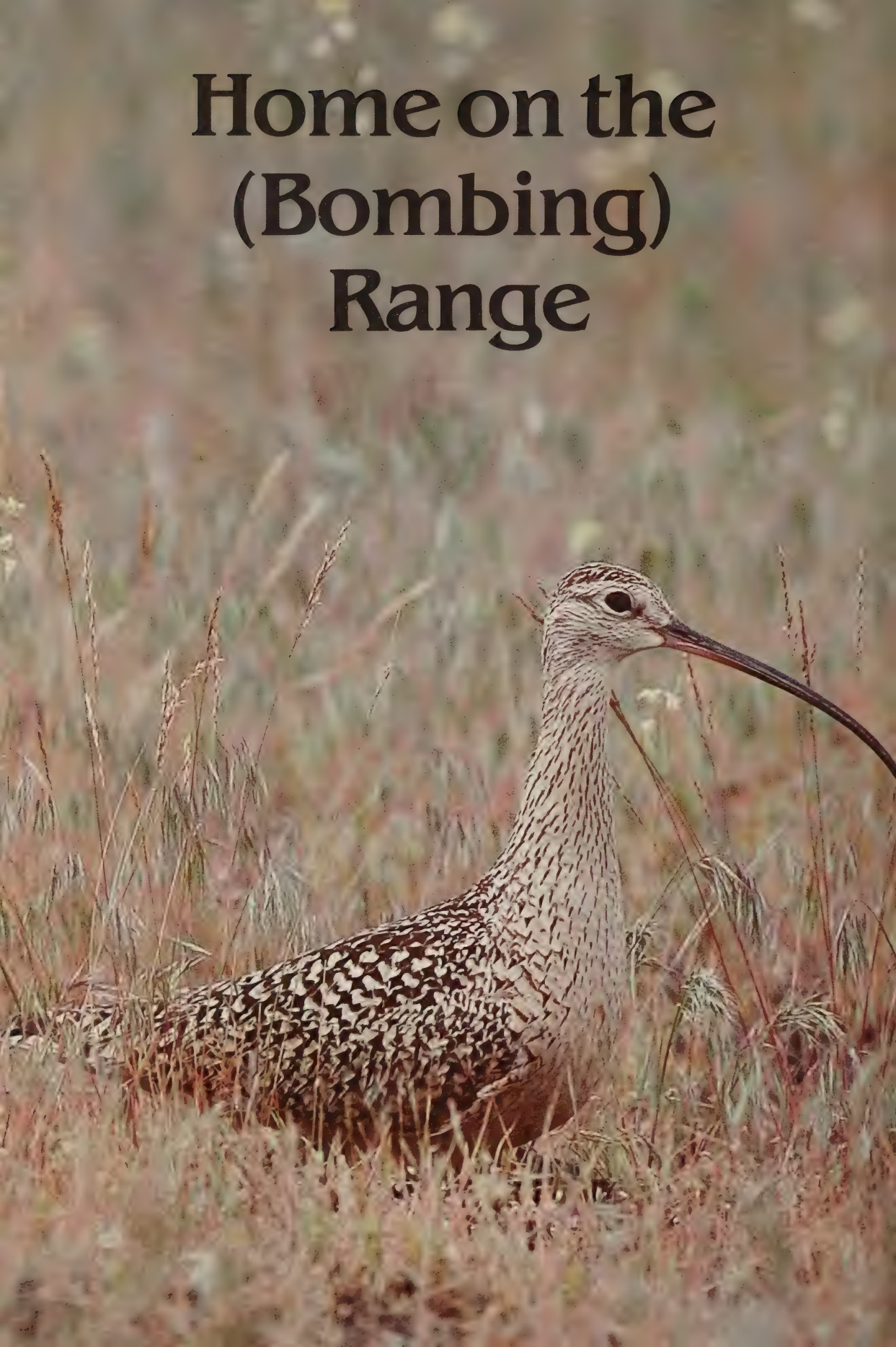
From the landowner's point of view, good will—and, in some cases, good publicity—is a major incentive. AMTRAK and the Conservancy cooperated to publish an interesting and colorful brochure on the AMTRAK prairies and how they were protected. The brochure is distributed to passengers riding AMTRAK's Detroit to Chicago runs. Year after year more and more members of the corporate world decide to support the Conservancy's efforts to preserve natural lands. Now, management agreements offer corporations, many of which own considerable property, a new opportunity to become involved in the Conservancy's work— and at a minimal cost.

Although management agreements have been little used, their success rate as a valid protection tool is high. Peg Kohring, who now manages the AMTRAK prairies, reports that the legal agreement for the grassland strips is working very nicely. AMTRAK has furnished signs for the six prairies to notify the railroad's maintenance crews that the areas are not to be bulldozed or mowed. Kohring, in turn, has set up a burning schedule that accomplishes the dual objectives of keeping the railroad track right-of-way clear and simulating the natural prairie-fire relationship. Also, a burning plan, which specifies the location and pattern of the burn, has been developed with the Forest Fire Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The local fire department and area residents are notified of the day of the burn, usually in early April. Because it rids the prairies of shrub growth, a spring burn is used. It does not disturb the new growth of grasses and other annual prairie plants.

The future of management agreements as quick, flexible, and effective protection techniques is promising. Without the new tool, a portion of Michigan's prairie heritage might have been lost. Instead, the AMTRAK agreement has secured a fragment of America's vanishing grasslands.

Louis Borie is currently a graduate student studying toward a master's degree in natural resources at the University of Michigan. A free-lance writer as well, he has written for *Yankee* and Vermont's *Burlington Free Press*.

Home on the (Bombing) Range



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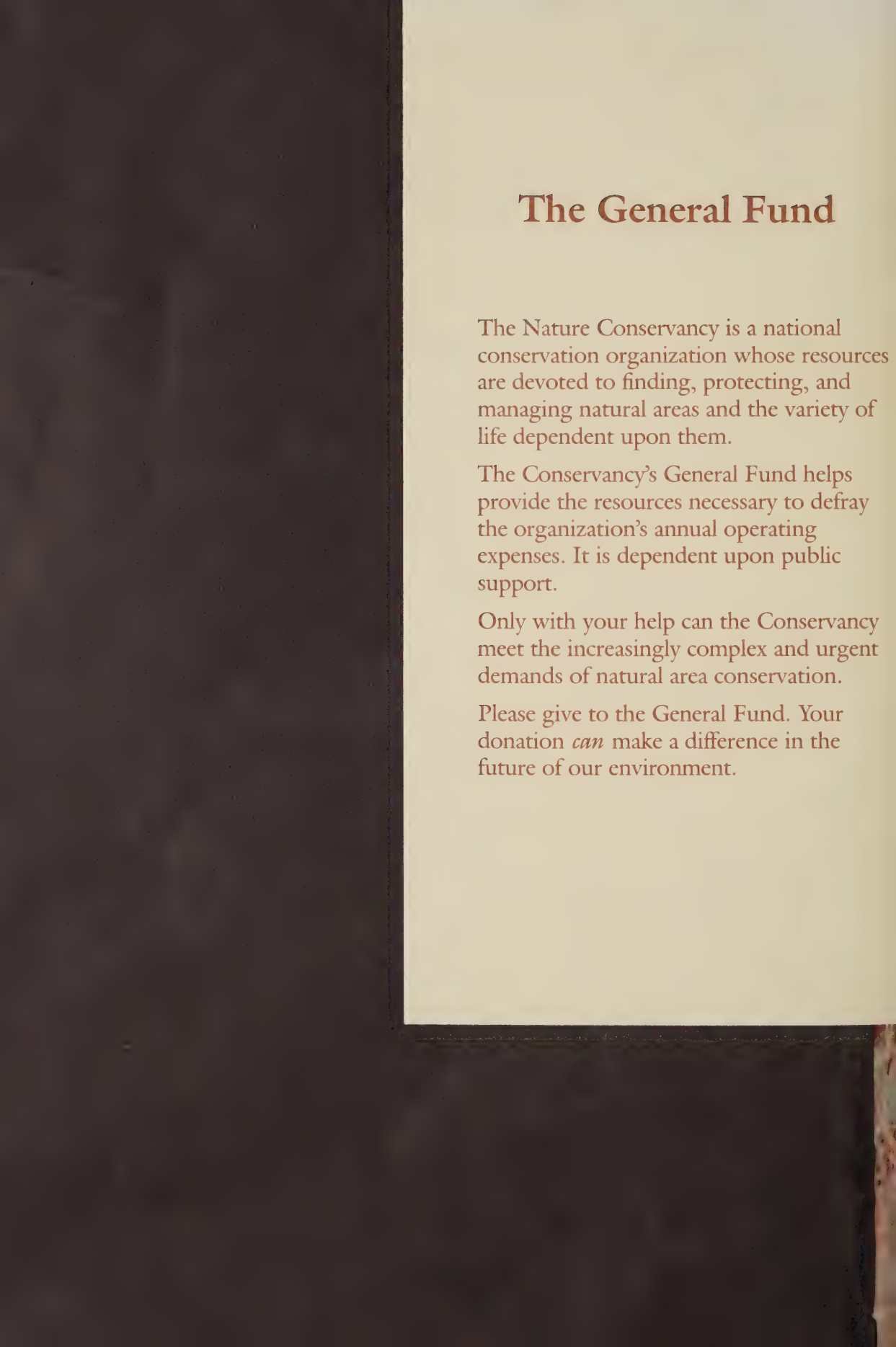
Osprey.



The General Fund

The Nature Conservancy is a national conservation organization whose resources are devoted to finding, protecting, and managing natural areas and the variety of life dependent upon them.

The Conservancy's General Fund helps provide the resources necessary to defray the organization's annual operating expenses. It is dependent upon public support.

Only with your help can the Conservancy meet the increasingly complex and urgent demands of natural area conservation.

Please give to the General Fund. Your donation *can* make a difference in the future of our environment.

Here is a list of my friends who would appreciate hearing of your efforts:

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Enclosed is my contribution of $_____ to the General Fund of The Nature Conservancy.

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Contributions are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to The Nature Conservancy. Your cancelled check is your receipt.

What we have saved and what we will save in the next few years will be all that will remain to be passed on to future generations.

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by John Hoffnagle

The Naval Weapons Systems Training Facility lies near the Columbia River at the southern edge of the Columbia Basin Plateau as it enters Oregon. The earth here is evidence of the immense volcanic activity that occurred in the area's geologic past. Huge flows of basalt crept over thousands of square miles of what today is southeastern Washington and northern Oregon, forming the basis for soils that nurture a mosaic of native bunchgrass communities. More recently, glacial episodes have sent flood waters full of worn soils and rocks onto approximately half the site.

Today, two types of flying objects dominate the landscape. Navy A-6 jet fighters make daily practice drops from their base on Whidbey Island, Washington. When they reach the bombing range, the pilots drop Mock-76 bombs on preselected targets. Each 25-pound bomb is armed with a small charge, which on impact yields only a puff of smoke, allowing spotters in nearby towers to gauge the accuracy of the strike.

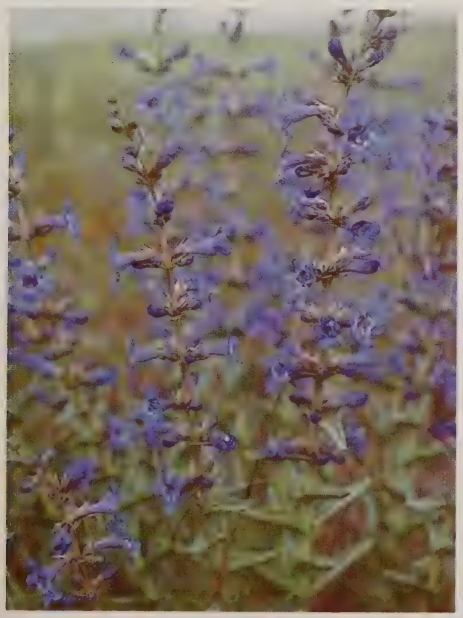
Sharing the sky with the fighters is the other dominant flying form of the area, the long-billed curlew. Some 300 nest yearly on the 86,000-acre range, forming the densest nesting population reported to date in North America.

The long-billed curlew once ranged throughout the Midwest. Largest of shorebirds, it preferred shortgrass prairies for nesting sites. Now that most of the dry prairies have given way to large-scale plowing and land conversion, the Boardman Bombing Range is one of the very last expanses of unplowed, ungrazed land. Here the precocious young curlews, which begin to walk within a day after hatching, wake to an environment much like one in which their ancestors lived.

The long-billed curlew is perhaps the most visible, though certainly not the only, occurrence of a declining species on the range. The only viable population of Washington ground squirrels known to occur in Oregon also inhabits the bombing range. Appearing above ground between February and June, the buff-colored, 6-to-8-inch-long rodents make the best of a difficult environment, subsisting on grasses and occasional insects during the late winter and early spring, when temperatures are moderate. All rare elsewhere, ferruginous hawks, Swainson's hawks, and golden eagles prey on the ground squirrels; long-eared owls and badgers complete the list of carnivores.

Three mature bunchgrass types—subjected to the same land-use practices that affected the curlew—now occur in pristine condition at Boardman. They exist nowhere else in North America. Needle and thread-Sandberg's bluegrass, bluebunch wheatgrass-Sandberg's bluegrass, and big sagebrush-needle and thread grass communities have returned to the range since the Navy prohibited grazing in the area over 40 years ago. While nearby, giant circular machines water more than 100 acres each of potatoes and alfalfa, the Boardman site remains untouched—its quilt of native plant communities intact and protected.

The Boardman Bombing Range is also one of the last sites where the original Oregon Trail can still be seen. Over 120 years ago, this path carried hopeful pioneers toward the fertile, green lands of Oregon's Willamette Valley. The historic



At home on the bombing range: long-billed curlew (opposite page), sharp-leaved penstemon (left), and Washington ground squirrel.

trail is now protected by a national historic designation.

Like the old Oregon Trail, a large, critical portion of the Boardman Bombing Range was recently safeguarded by use of a method designed to protect both the natural features and the military utility of the land. The U.S. Navy, the Federal Research Natural Area Committee, and The Nature Conservancy recently designated a 5,000-acre research natural area at the range. Creation of the Boardman Research Natural Area illustrates that natural areas *can* be protected while receiving some types of use; and that a group of federal, state, and private organizations with different objectives but similar sensitivities can together safeguard a special area. The Federal Research Natural Area Program makes such a cooperative effort possible.

Since 1927, the land management agencies of the federal government have been developing a research natural area system, which now includes 423 areas covering 4.5 million acres of federal lands in 46 states and one territory. Eight agencies participate in the program: the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture; the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service under the Department of Interior; the Department of Energy, the Department of Defense, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Each agency can designate Research Natural Areas through its own channels, and the areas are managed by the agency involved in their creation with the help of federal and regional Research Natural Area committees.

In the West, where federal lands comprise over half the land area, the Research Natural Area program is at the heart of natural diversity preservation. In the Oregon Cascades, for example, virtually all of the land is federally owned. Therefore, the agencies owning and managing these areas are responsible for recognizing and protecting representative communities, ecosystems, and species' habitats by setting aside lands through designation programs such as the Research Natural Area program.

The Pacific Northwest Research Natural Area Program is gradually creating a healthy system of preserves. In Oregon and Washington, 67 areas —comprising nearly 100,000 acres—already have been designated. Two thousand potential sites have been cataloged; probably 300 of these will eventually be set aside. The Boardman Bombing Range was one of the six areas given top priority for designation as a Research Natural Area.

In 1975, members of the Oregon Natural Area Preserve Advisory Committee surveyed the Boardman Range, and their field data was incorporated into the Oregon Natural Heritage Program data base. Early in 1978, Bill Copeland, a Heritage Program staff ecologist, read a newspaper story entitled, "U.S. Navy to Expand Grazing at Boardman." The article explained that since the accuracy of the A-6 jet fighters had increased, the number of acres needed to serve as a buffer for the target area had decreased. Therefore bids for grazing the unused land would be accepted immediately.

Copeland recalled that there were unusual natural features on the range. Reviewing the information on Boardman contained in the Heritage data base convinced him that he should try to protect the grasslands.

When he contacted the Navy lands manager, Copeland found that bids for grazing leases had already been made. Undeterred, he appealed to the district range supervisor and then to the base commander to delay the grazing contracts. He felt that the ecological significance of the site warranted Research Natural Area status. The base commander agreed with Copeland, as long as designation of the Boardman Range did not interfere with flight maneuvers.

Two already fenced tracts in the range were likely candidates for designation. One, the central bombing target, appeared to be little affected by the 25-pound bombs. Some ecologists even argued that the occasional range fire started by the bombs may have been, in part, responsible for the pristine condition of the grasslands. Another unit, fenced to stabilize sand, was also a natural candidate. The third tract, however, encompassing the best plant community types and the Washington ground squirrels, had to be enclosed with over seven miles of fence. Appealing for quick help, The Nature Conservancy secured a temporary loan to buy fencing materials. The huge enclosure was then built with the help of local U.S. Forest Service Young Adult Conservation Corps crews, volunteers from a local college, and Conservancy staff.

On April 15, 1980, the 5,000-acre Boardman Research Natural Area was formally designated. While a cheering crowd of Navy personnel, Conservancy staff and volunteers, and federal Research Natural Area committee members watched, a champagne bottle was shattered over an ancient glacial boulder. It was a peculiar kind of "launching ceremony"—set 500 miles from the nearest seaport—for the occasion celebrated persistence rather than departure: the persistence of a rare and fragile ecosystem.

John Hoffnagle is Land Steward for the Conservancy's Oregon Field Office, headquartered in Portland.

Creative Protection, Adirondack Style

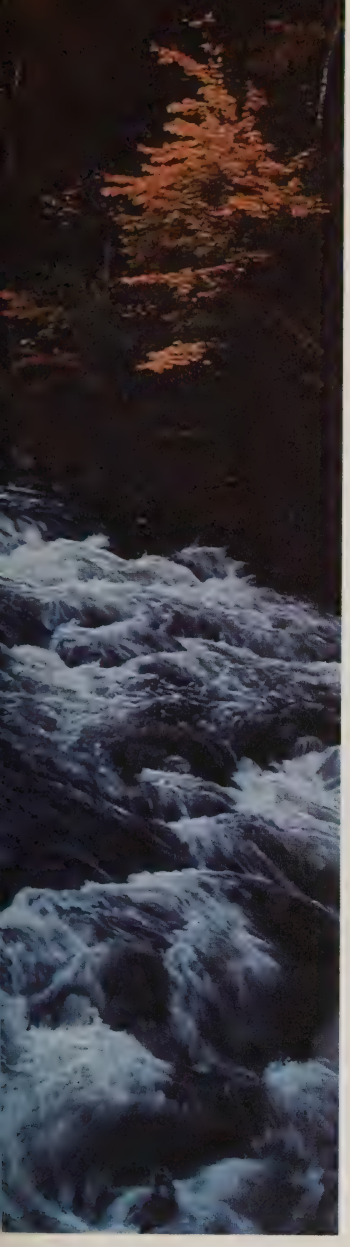
by Michael G. Di Nunzio

Owning real estate has been compared to owning a bundle of sticks: individual sticks can be bartered or given away; and if you own even just one stick, you have a vested interest in a portion of the real estate. The most obvious sticks in a "property bundle" are water rights, mineral rights, forest rights, and rights-of-way of all types—for roads, power lines, sewers, railroads, etc. From this large and complicated bundle emerges the concept of conservation easements.

Landowners who donate or sell a conservation easement are basically relinquishing some of the rights to develop their property (other sticks in the "land bundle"). Granting an easement does not involve transferring ownership of the land, nor does it eliminate the owners' rights to sell or

lease the property or leave it to their heirs. In addition, owners may continue to live on their land while realizing, in most cases, a significant tax benefit. (If the development rights of property have been restricted by an easement—thereby reducing the economic value of the land—the estate taxes are reduced and the owner is entitled to deduct, as a charitable contribution, the value of the easement.) The greatest benefit, of course, is that a significant site is maintained in its natural state. Usually granted in perpetuity, conservation easements are recorded in the land deeds, and sale or lease of the property is subject to the terms of the easement.

Conservation easements are not new protection tools—The Nature Conservancy has acquired over



Top left: portions of New York's Wild and Scenic Recreational Rivers System flow through Adirondack easement lands; bottom left: key habitat for the spruce grouse, a rare bird in the state, has easement protection; below, ram's-head lady's-slipper orchids ornament an Adirondack easement property.

80 to date. What is innovative, however, are the formalized procedures the Conservancy has developed to create easements that will best protect critical natural elements while, at the same time, satisfying the needs and wishes of the landowners.

The Adirondack Conservancy Committee and the Conservancy's Eastern Regional Office staff have designed conservation easements that now protect more than 74,000 acres on eight separate private tracts within New York's six-million-acre Adirondack Park. The Adirondack easements safeguard rare and endangered plant and animal habitats, virgin forests, scenic vistas, and waterways within the state's Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers System. Equally important, the experience gained during this five-year effort led to the development of procedures for inventorying the natural qualities of the large areas pinpointed for protection, for drafting appropriate legal documents, and for monitoring the terms of the easements.

Conservation easements facilitate preserving critical resources on private lands by transferring to the Conservancy only those rights it needs to safeguard specific elements or features on a piece of property. This means that easements can often allow a great variety of compatible land uses and even limited development, as long as the uses do not threaten the protection objectives. For example, the Adirondack Conservancy Committee has fashioned agreements that permit limited construction, timber harvesting, fish and wildlife man-

agement, farming, and other activities—where there is no conflict with the Conservancy's goals for a specific site.

Easements are legally binding agreements that will be recorded forever in a deed; therefore, their terms must be carefully developed. Because the Adirondack project, in particular, involves huge areas complex in both their natural makeup and property ownership, sensitivity and foresight had to be exercised in determining easement restrictions. The Conservancy's purpose was not total prohibition but limited and controlled land use. Decisions concerning the degree of protection required had to be based upon a careful assessment of the ecological values of the eight properties.

The restrictions and reserved rights comprising the Adirondack Park easements evolved from a thorough resource evaluation of the tracts. In the simplest appraisal, only three factors are considered: the location of natural elements needing preservation, the development of protective measures for these features, and the location of all existing man-made structures and improvements. Usually, however, the evaluation is more complicated, as in the case of the Adirondack easements. To insure the accuracy of the assessment, the Adirondack Conservancy Committee developed a series of detailed maps, which depicted topography, critical biological features, soil types, aquatic features, vegetational cover, and man-made structures (from buildings and bridges to roads and dams). Surveys of zoning restrictions, local history, and surrounding land uses were also completed; sketches, aerial photographs, and other data were compiled.

All of the material, particularly the maps and aerial photos, verifies the "pre-easement" appearance and condition of the properties and constitutes documentation for monitoring the terms of the easements. Such information also helps clarify exactly what the protected natural elements need to survive in association with ongoing land-use activities.

Using all the information gathered from the resource evaluation, Conservancy personnel and the landowners then negotiated the specific terms of the Adirondack easements. Insuring the preservation of critical habitats and features while permitting certain other land uses was not an easy task. To meet this challenge, the Adirondack Conservancy Committee developed four categories or determinations that are used to regulate the easements. All activities in the easement areas fall into one of these classifications: unregulated, subject to consultation with the Conservancy before being undertaken, requiring Conservancy approval, or totally prohibited. The location of a proposed activity often determines its classification. For example, timber harvesting and the road construction accompanying it may be permitted in some areas but prohibited near endangered species' habitats. Consulting with the Conservancy is usually required for projects such as water level control (which may involve building a dam), since such an activity could adversely affect a critical natural area far from the construction site. Obviously, flexibility is an integral part of creating easement restrictions.

Designing a suitable easement is really only the first step. Ideally, a conservation easement should protect the natural values identified throughout the tenure of countless generations of landowners. Forever is a long time. By holding an easement, the Conservancy accepts the responsibility of monitoring its terms and insuring that critical natural elements are being protected.

Easements must be monitored efficiently, regularly, and with minimum inconvenience to the landowner. To simplify monitoring, the Adirondack Conservancy provides the person doing the task a "monitoring package," which contains all essential information about each tract of land. Maps show access roads, property boundaries, and developed areas. Photographs of most improvements are keyed to scale drawings so that comparisons can be made between present conditions and those that are shown on the original maps. A checklist is also included to be sure that all items are inventoried. Changes in both natural and man-made systems are inevitable and can easily be noted. Since Conservancy review and approval of certain land-use activities is a major aspect of the Adirondack Conservancy Committee's plan, a special committee has been charged with this responsibility.

The Conservancy's experience with the Adirondack Park easements suggests that we have only begun to explore the protection possibilities of conservation easements. Nonetheless, if both the landowners and the Conservancy sign a legal document the terms of which are stated clearly and understood mutually, and if compliance can be adequately measured, there will be fewer problems with using easements as protection tools in the future. The original excitement and commitment is bound to diminish somewhat over the years, but a well-drafted and carefully monitored conservation easement commands enduring respect.

A consulting ecologist, **Michael Di Nunzio** spent two years helping develop the Adirondack Conservancy Committee's Conservation Easement Program. He is currently writing a series of natural history publications on the Adirondack Park.

NEW PROJECTS

California

SANTA CRUZ LONG-TOED SALAMANDER PRESERVE (Santa Cruz County). A .75-acre tract of oak woodland with a dense understory extends protected habitat for the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander *(Ambystoma macrodactylum croceum),* a federally endangered amphibian that is endemic to this county. Purchased in cooperation with the California Wildlife Conservation Board, which will manage it, this small property lies adjacent to one of three known breeding habitats for the rare subspecies—20-acre Valencia Lagoon, a conservation area in the ownership of the California Department of Game and Fish.

Illinois

SHOOP PRAIRIE (Tazewell County). Commanding a superb view of the Illinois River Valley, this 20-acre property tops a glacially formed gravel terrace not far from Peoria. Its outstanding feature is a stretch of virgin dry-sand-and-gravel prairie dominated by little bluestem and sideoats grama grasses. More than 50 flowering plants—including characteristic prairie species such as purple coneflower, wild petunia, and prickly pear cactus—have been identified on the land, as well as such locally uncommon plants as kitten tails and prairie satin grass. But Shoop Prairie's greatest ecological significance lies in its population (the only known in the state) of Tennessee milkvetch plants *(Astragalus tennessensis),* believed to be extinct in Illinois for more than half a century. Management of the prairie, which is slated for dedication as a state nature preserve, is the responsibility of the Illinois Chapter. A local volunteer committee is raising funds to cover acquisition costs.

Maryland

SULLIVAN'S COVE (Anne Arundel County). Averting plans for a luxury home development on this ecologically significant land west of the Chesapeake Bay, the Conservancy purchased the 14-acre property—upland woods (supporting the locally rare Atlantic white cedar), hillside bog, brackish marsh, and some 230 feet of riverbank —for transfer to Anne Arundel County. Sullivan's Cove contains one of the Severn River's last remaining stretches of bog-covered marshland, hosts hundreds of migrant waterfowl, and provides a resting area for southern bald eagles, little blue herons, white and glossy ibises. Shrubs such as sheep laurel, possum-haw, inkberry, and smooth winterberry thrive on the tract, which is used by the Smithsonian Institution for winter botany classes. The Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks will manage the natural area.

Michigan

NORDHOUSE DUNES (Mason County). A 598-acre stretch of shoreline (nearly 9,000 feet on Lake Michigan) and dunes was the last private inholding between Ludington State Park and the Nordhouse Dunes Area of Manistee National Forest. Assisting the U.S. Forest Service, to which the property has been transferred, the Conservancy purchased this prime example of Lake Michigan dune ecology on five-days' notice. The property harbors two plant species that are candidates for federally threatened status: the ram's head lady's-slipper orchid and Pitcher's thistle, a Great Lakes endemic found in no other part of the world.

Montana

PINE BUTTE SWAMP—Addition—(Teton County). A conservation easement safeguards an additional 2,104 acres of this wildlife bonanza on the Rocky Mountain front—from native short-grass prairie land to rocky ridges of limber pine and juniper to spruce-fir forests, mountain streams, glacial ponds, and spring-fed swamp. The Bowman Ranch property offers seasonal habitat for migrating mammals such as plains grizzly bears, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, and mule deer. With the acquisition of this easement, Conservancy protection here along the Teton River now spans 8,890 acres, nearly one fourth of the projected 40,000-acre Pine Butte Swamp assemblage. Funding sights for the entire project are set at $4 million, of which some $1 million has been pledged thus far.

New York

WADING RIVER MARSH SANCTUARIES—Addition—(Suffolk County). A 3-acre tract of undisturbed tidal wetlands bordering on Wading River Creek extends this Conservancy preserve eastward. It is one of five small private inholdings targeted for acquisition by the Long Island Chapter in completion of its Wading River Marsh assemblage, now 80 acres in extent. One of two significant salt marshes remaining on the island's north shore, Wading River serves as spawning and nursery habitat for many marine organisms and provides feeding grounds for shorebirds and waterfowl—including clapper rails, herons, and spotted sandpipers. The preserve is managed by the Long Island Chapter.

Oregon

LOWER TABLE ROCK—Addition—(Jackson County). Nine hundred acres of important bufferland for the Conservancy's 957-acre preserve complex have been safeguarded with a conservation easement. This dry, grassy valley property is set within horseshoe-shaped Lower Table Rock, a wildlife- rich mesa, with Kelly Slough on its southern boundary. A small spring-fed stream courses through the valley—from the oak and scrub savanna of its upper reaches to grassland below—en route to the slough itself, and mule deer are plentiful. Conservancy protection in the Lower Table Rock/Kelly Slough area now covers 1,857 acres.

Texas

LOWER RIO GRANDE (Cameron County). This is *boscaje* (bosque) *de la palma* country: a palm jungle prospering in the subtropical climate of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Nearly a third of this 367-acre natural area, purchased in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is brushland laced with oxbows or *resacas,* creating a rare and fragile environment higher in wildlife value than any other habitat in the valley. Lying north of Audubon's 172-acre Sabal Palm Grove Sanctuary, the land is frequented by hundreds of passerine birds in their southern migrations and is suitable habitat for numerous faunal species—from the federally endangered (ocelot, jaguarundi, peregrine falcon) to the state-protected nongame (lesser yellow bat, Mexican tree frog, white-faced ibis, Texas indigo snake, to name just a few). All of these have been sighted in the immediate vicinity of the Conservancy property, which will be transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for inclusion in its projected "Boscaje de la Palma" refuge assemblage.

Ford Eagle Preserve

Summer 1978: Ford Motor Company's Mining Properties Division decides to auction off some of its extensive holdings on Michigan's Upper Peninsula, including a choice 67-acre lake-shore property in southwestern Marquette County. A prospective buyer visits the land and judges it to be just what he's been looking for in a summer retreat. But something he spots high in a white pine above a narrow finger bay of the lake stops him in his tracks—a bald eagle nest. He sees the nest, and he sees eagles soaring overhead.

This conservation-minded citizen called the Conservancy's Michigan Field Office shortly after his discovery, with only ten days remaining until Ford was slated to sell the land to the highest bidder. When asked for their opinions, government biologists advised Conservancy staffers that most of the 67 acres should remain undeveloped if the eagles were to have sufficient space for nesting, feeding, and roosting. And a wildlife ecologist who had studied bald eagle populations in Wisconsin and Michigan for 15 years told the Michigan Field Office that he'd recently made an aerial survey of the nest itself and found it occupied by an adult pair and two young. He explained that eagles had been nesting on this lake since the 1940's (or even earlier)—driven from nest site to nest site as human activity encroached upon the shoreline, about half of which is now bordered by summer cottages.

The Conservancy sprang into action, informing the manager of Ford's Mining Properties Division of the nest. Surprised by the news and receptive to the idea of protecting the nationally endangered birds, he agreed to cancel sale of the property. In return, the Michigan office submitted a proposal recommending that an ecological inventory of the tract be undertaken by the Conservancy and a management plan drawn up. Work commenced.

With the survey and the management plan complete, "Ford Eagle Preserve" was established earlier this year through an innovative protection agreement between the two parties. While Ford will retain title to the land, the Conservancy will manage it for the preservation of its significant natural assets—the nesting eagles—and file a report with Ford each year as to their status. Should the eagles abandon the site for five successive years, the agreement will be terminated.

Summer 1980: bald eagles are nesting undisturbed in a white pine on a 67-acre lake-shore property in Michigan. Little do they know they live in Ford Eagle Preserve, or that the conservation challenge they presented has been met.

CONSERVANCY COLORING BOOKS AVAILABLE

The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve and Prairie Coloring Books are available from the National Office. The two 32-page coloring books were designed to promote greater appreciation and understanding of prairie and coastal ecosystems.

The Virginia Coast Reserve Coloring Book highlights the colorful history of the barrier islands, their unique plant and animal life, and The Nature Conservancy's role in their preservation. Captain John Smith, Blackbeard the Pirate, and the Machipongo Indians are among the interesting characters included in this book.

The Prairie Coloring Book gives a glimpse of the diverse flora and fauna and the interrelationships that contribute to the unique prairie ecosystem. The book acquaints the young colorer with the prairie's history—from buffalo and Indian to railroad and farm—and with the many life forms the prairie harbors, including yellow-headed blackbird, ferruginous hawk, and pronghorned antelope.

An excellent Christmas gift, the coloring books are priced at $1.50 each for Conservancy members ($1.75 each for non-members). They may be obtained by sending a check, payable to The Nature Conservancy, to: Secretary, Land Stewardship, The Nature Conservancy, 1800 N. Kent Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209. Please be sure to specify the title and quantity of coloring books desired.

Vermont

H. LAURENCE ACHILLES NATURAL AREA — Addition — (Chittenden County). Shelburne Pond is a wilderness lake only six miles from Burlington. Since 1973, the Conservancy has protected 533 acres here—including this 28-acre parcel on the southern end of the assemblage—and more than half of Shelburne's shoreline. The new addition comprises 1,000 feet of lake shore, with a vista of the entire "Pond" area, and adjacent wetlands (cattail marsh and alder swamp). Listed as one of the state's most significant natural areas by the Vermont Natural Areas Inventory, Shelburne Pond is also a proposed National Natural Landmark. The purchase of this addition was funded by an earlier donation from H. Laurence Achilles for acquisitions at Shelburne, which is considered the Vermont Chapter's most significant ongoing project. The parcel will be transferred to the University of Vermont for administration as an educational and scientific area.

West Virginia

MONONGAHELA NATIONAL FOREST—Reed's Creek Addition—(Pendleton County). This 102-acre tract of rolling oak-hickory woodland was purchased in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service. A spring on the property forms the headwaters of a clear feeder stream of the Reed's Creek drainage, an area that provides habitat for several bird and plant species classified as rare by the West Virginia Heritage Trust. These include black vulture, lark sparrow, and Kate's Mountain clover. The land will be transferred for inclusion in the Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area.

LEETOWN NATIONAL FISHERIES CENTER (Jefferson County). This 168-acre property in the state's eastern panhandle lies adjacent to the nation's foremost fisheries center for training, research, and environmental education. The southern portion of the tract contains 25 acres of marl marsh crossed by a high-quality limestone stream, a significant feature of the watershed that supports the nearby hatchery. The land may provide habitat for species rare in the state, such as osprey, merlin (or pigeon hawk), northern cricket frog, and spotted turtle—all of which have been sighted in the vicinity. Charted for transfer to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the parcel will be included in the fisheries center.

Honorary Members for Life

The Board of Governors has recently elected to Honorary Membership for Life all donors who have made outright gifts of natural land to The Nature Conservancy. It is a pleasure to give public recognition to these members whose generosity is a very significant element in the Conservancy's continuing success.

The list which follows is intended to include all such living donors whose gifts have been recorded through January 1, 1980. Subsequent donors will also be listed in the *News*. The list has been carefully researched; however, it spans three decades, and some errors may be included. We will be glad to have them brought to our attention.

ALASKA
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